

to play politics with this nomination. I urge my colleagues to reject the efforts of those who have wrongfully sought to taint John Walters and to support an immediate vote on his nomination.

Finally, I urge Chairman LEAHY not to let this session end without holding hearings for the deputy positions at ONDCP. Mr. Walters needs his team in place. I look forward to working with my Senate Republican and Democratic colleagues and the administration to carry forward our fight against drug trafficking and terrorism.

Let me make one or two final remarks. I was pleased to see the Judiciary Committee pass out the nine additional district judges, one a circuit court judge nominee and eight district court nominees, and, in addition, to pass out two other top officials in the Bush administration and, of course, a number of U.S. Attorneys. I commend our chairman for doing that. I commend him for moving forward on these judges.

We have come a long way from when the criticisms reached their height. We still have a long way to go because there are still 101 vacancies in the Federal judiciary as I stand here today. Frankly, that is probably 101 too many. Be that as it may, we all know that we have to do something about them.

As we prepare to recess, there is one startling fact that needs more attention. On May 9, President Bush nominated 11 outstanding attorneys to serve as Federal appellate court judges. To this date, nearly three quarters of those nominees are still pending in the Judiciary Committee without a hearing. Although all of these nominees received qualified or well-qualified ratings from the American Bar Association, only 3 of those first 11 nominees have had a hearing. At present, there are 30 vacancies in the Federal courts of appeals. Some courts, such as the DC circuit, are functioning under a dramatically reduced capacity.

President Bush has responded to the vacancy crisis in the appellate courts by nominating a total of 28 top-notch men and women to these posts, a number of circuit court nominees that is unprecedented in the first years of recent administrations. Yet the Judiciary Committee has managed to move just five appeals court judges from the committee to the Senate floor for a vote. Last year at this time we had 67 vacancies in the Federal judiciary. Since Senator LEAHY has become chairman, the vacancy rate has never been below 100. I am concerned that this number will only continue to grow after Congress recesses next month.

I urge my colleagues on the other side to use the remaining weeks of this session to hold hearings and votes on judicial nominees to combat the alarming vacancy rate.

Having said that, I am pleased that the chairman did allow nine judges to

pass out today. I hope he will continue to work in a bipartisan fashion with me to pass more out. I am proud to work with Senator LEAHY. I certainly want to cooperate with him in every way I possibly can. I believe the other Republicans on the committee do as well.

There is a lot of criticism that goes back and forth on judges. I have to say, it is difficult to be chairman of this committee. I sympathize with Senator LEAHY on some of the difficulties he has had. I know there are people on his side who would just as soon not have any Bush judges go on through, as there were occasionally on our side. It is very difficult to meet some of the objections and to overcome them and to resolve some of the political problems that arise. We have to do it. We have to stand up and work with both sides to get the Federal courts as full as we possibly can so that justice can proceed, especially in the case of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, the District Court of the District of Columbia as well, so that we can handle all of the terrorist issues that will come before that particular court.

Having said all of that, I hope we can move ahead with John Walters; if there are any holds, that they will be removed; and if they won't remove them, I hope the majority leader will ignore the holds, bring this up for a battle on the floor, and then have a vote up or down and let the chips fall where they may.

I believe Mr. Walters will be confirmed. I believe he must be confirmed. If we don't get him confirmed, I believe the rate of youth drug use will continue to rise. Frankly, we have had enough of that. We have to get a very tough policy going again on drugs, and that should include both the supply and demand sides.

I will make sure that this new administration, under John Walters, will take care of the demand side as well as the supply side. If we pass S. 304 through the Senate on which Senator LEAHY and I have worked so hard, I believe it will go to the House. I believe they will pass it, and it will go a long way toward resolving some of the really serious drug problems we have among our young people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in

recess today from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m., and that the time be charged under rule XXII. We will reconvene at 3:30.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for those who are listening, this is really important that we do this. We are privileged today that both the Democrat and Republican caucuses will listen to the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, talk about world affairs. Then we are going to have a briefing upstairs.

It is important that all Senators attend the luncheon with Colin Powell and the briefing upstairs about what is going on in Afghanistan.

We know that a number of Senators have expressed a desire to speak. The junior Senator from Michigan is here. She wishes to speak. I understand Senator CARNAHAN is here. So we will recess at 12:30. Everybody should be advised that the time until then is open. Perhaps we could arrange some times, if that is helpful to the parties here. It is my understanding that Senator CARNAHAN wishes to speak, but I don't know for how long. Maybe we can get things set up so people don't have to wait around. The Senator from Michigan wants to speak for 15 minutes. The Senator from Illinois wants 5 minutes. So we have Senator DURBIN for 5, Senator CARNAHAN for 10, Senator STABENOW for 15, and Senator THOMPSON wants 15.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Illinois be recognized for 5 minutes, the Senator from Michigan be recognized for 15 minutes, the Senator from Missouri be recognized for 10 minutes, and then Senator THOMPSON be recognized for the final 15 minutes. That would take us to the recess.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Illinois.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Nevada for his leadership. He works so hard on the floor on a regular basis to make sure things run smoothly and we get about the business of deliberating important issues. At this time, there is no more important an issue than the economic stimulus package. As we move around the Nation, clearly people have lost jobs and businesses are hurting. We need to spark this economy, to move it forward.

There was good news yesterday on Capitol Hill. The leaders—Democrats and Republicans—came together to start a process to lead to a stimulus package, a recovery package that will truly help all Americans. I have taken a look at many of the proposals here, and I certainly support the Democrats' position that we need to help families who have lost their jobs. If you are unemployed in America today and you